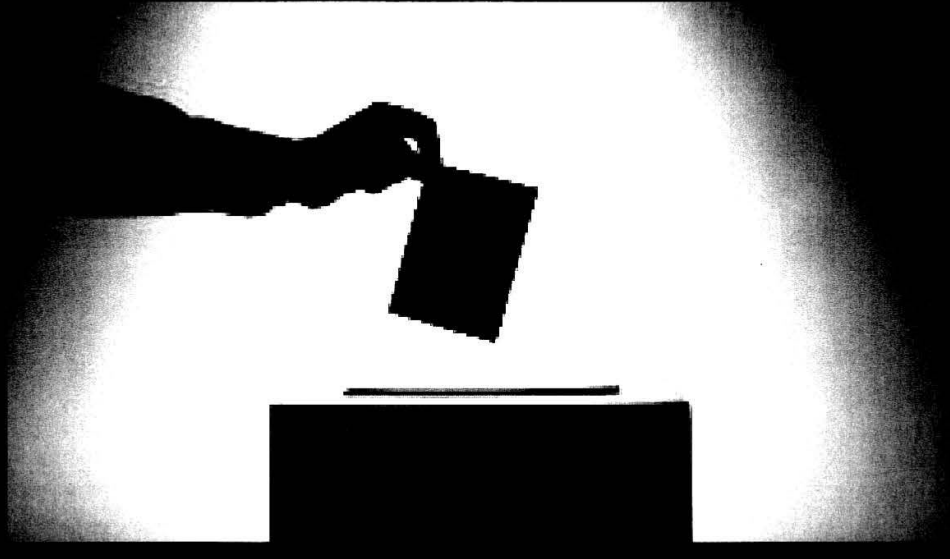
Issue Two September 2014

aargh!

Aotearoa Anarchist Review



Much ado about nothing...

"And he gave it for his opinion, that whosoever could make two ears of corn or two blades of grass to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his (sic) country, than the whole race of politicians put together."

– Jonathan Swift
Gulliver's Travels
1726

aargh! is an anarchist periodical produced in Wellington, Aotearoa, by the Freedom Shop Collective.

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EDITORIAL

Aargh! Here it comes again!

WELCOME to the second issue of *aargh!* (the *Aotearoa Anarchist Review Growth Hormone*).

As we write this, a general election looms in which we get to select our bosses for the next three years, choosing from the capitalist party, the other capitalist party, the other capitalist party, and for the way-out thinkers – the alternative capitalist party.

Some declare that, despite our misgivings about hierarchy, unrecallable authority and an economic system that is wrecking the planet, we should vote for the lesser evil. In most cases, this simply means they've forgotten what the Labour Party was like when it was in power – the confiscation of the seabed and foreshore, loosing the police on Maori communities, sending the military to back United States occupations, backing the then proposed Pike River and Happy Valley coal mines regardless of the consequences for workers and the environment, while largely ignoring the poor and disenfranchised, both here and overseas.

Promoting voting, cynically or otherwise, is simply raising false hopes and clouding serious analysis.

Those who dream of reforming capitalism through regulation and government actions don't understand where power lies in society. If the government doesn't play the corporates' game, they will first use their huge resources to mount lobbying and media campaigns. Should that fail, they'll move on to violent methods, and if nothing else works, take their money and go elsewhere, leaving a wrecked economy behind them.

Change, and possibly survival, means building communities that can do without capitalism, producing the things they need and sharing them. You can't fix a problem when you are dependent on those who are intent on creating the problem.

Feel free to vote: it is of no consquence – we all enjoy doing silly things sometimes. But remember that real change lies elsewhere and requires a deep change in the way we see the world and a concerted effort to build a new society by the only people who will ever do this – ourselves.

Cheers

The Freedom Shop Collective

50 Days of Democracy

By Peppertree

IN THE past 20 years, there has hardly been an election that has made it clearer what a farce the whole thing is.

While in the '90s a lot of people on the left were getting excited about MMP (and some of them joined the Alliance or the Greens and became MPs), the continuation of the neo-liberal agenda from the Bolger/Shipley government to the Clark government and through to the Key era has once again shown that what is presented as the big choice between Labour and National really isn't a choice at all.

But this time there really can't be any illusions. It seems that those standing for election are doing everything they can to discourage people from voting.

Never has a campaign been so void of content. National is all about "Team Key", as if this were a yacht race; Winston Peters stole the only term that signified Peter Dunne ("common sense" – a popular slogan which in politics means little more than "I'm right, the others are wrong"); the Greens recycled a patriotic slogan that is usually stickered on rubbish bins ("Love NZ") and have a photo of their co-leaders looking like they are about to get married on the steps of parliament; the Conservatives want to keep the government on a short leash like a pit-bull terrier that can be set upon the unsuspecting public if need be; Mana/Internet have a picture of a cat and the slogan "party party". But the pinnacle is Labour. How on earth does one "vote positive"? Shouldn't it be 'positively', anyway? And can anyone name a single Labour policy on anything?

Virtually all the parties could rip up their policy documents and replace them with the phrase – more of the same. There's no inspiring visions or ideals, at least, none articulated by anyone at all coherent or convincing. What passes for 'the left' is either desperately trying to appease capitalism, or just desperately trying to look competent.

Russel Norman of the social democratic Green Party took appeasement a step further by declaring his party to be more pro-market than the right-wing parties: "We're very pro the use of market forces, whereas National are into state intervention". A brilliant strategy of furthering your party's beliefs by trying to claim it doesn't hold them.

The minimal standards of decency once practised by politicians are slipping even further. Apart from the nasty smear tactics that Nicky Hager has just revealed in his latest book, Dirty Politics, every party seems to be engaged in things that would have caused an outrage only a few years ago among those who think that parliamentary democracy is so fantastic. The furore caused by Hager's revelations, which aren't all that surprising to anyone paying attention to parliamentary politics, is largely a result of the lack of anything else to talk about. Key is learning the pitfalls of his 'no-policy, no-politics just universal blandness' strategy. Relying on a nice guy image is a fragile position, but perhaps the only one to take when your political position is indistinguishable from the other parties.

There are the deals of National with its potential coalition partners to stand or not stand candidates in certain electorates. This is not unusual, but this time it was topped by Winston Peters announcing that he might stand in an electorate with which he has nothing to do, just to prevent Colin Craig from the Conservatives getting in. Good on him for wanting to prevent the likes of Craig from having a say in legislation, but it shows what a load of bullshit the talk about MPs representing their electorate is.

Then there is Kim Dotcom who simply did openly what big business has always done under the (round) table – he just went and bought himself a party. It is almost comical that this millionaire party party is providing a second career to exactly those people who told us in the '90s that MMP would bring real democracy.

Anyone who participates in this circus deserves the government they get. However, let's be optimistic. The mainstream media is reporting that the rate of vandalism of political billboards is higher than ever before, with the Labour Party running out of replacement signs in some areas. Wrecking a billboard doesn't necessarily demonstrate a high level of political understanding, but a gut feeling that politicians deserve to be treated with contempt is a start.

NZ currently has its 50th government. This means that in the last 160 years, the people have "had their say" on exactly 50 days. Surely, no one can seriously call that democracy @@@

The Green Party

By Eva Destruction

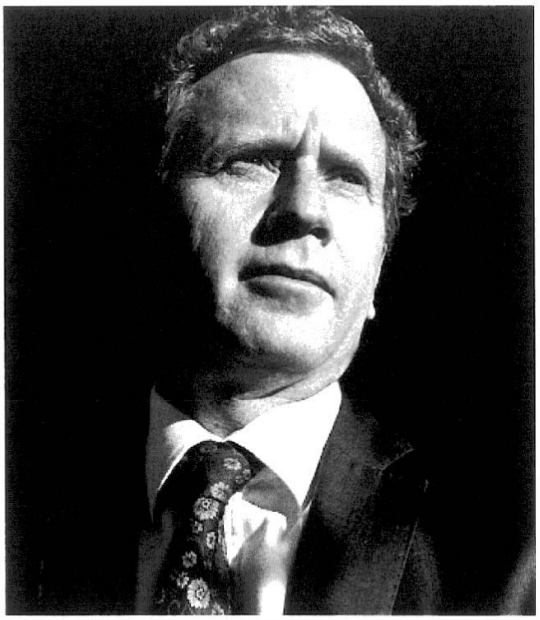
IMAGINE a large community house, being used by a diverse bunch of charity and activist groups. Some of these groups have formed themselves into factions that are perennially arguing with one another. The house is also used by grassroots organisations who just want to get on with things.

For many of us, this scenario won't be too difficult to conjure up. Now imagine the community house just happens to be on fire. While the two largest factions (let's call them A and B) are seated in the main meeting room arguing about whether the house is actually on fire or not, the grassroots folk start to evacuate. Once they're assembled on the footpath, someone is nominated to call the fire brigade. While this is happening, the co-leader of Faction C approaches and says "Hey, everybody! It's all OK! We've figured out the PERFECT solution. Yes, the house is on fire, but I have a bucket. Now, if everyone pisses in this bucket, problem solved. There's no need to call the fire brigade at all! What a relief!" And while the others look on, incredulous, members of Faction C do indeed start pissing in the bucket. Not only this, but they moan loudly about everyone else who is refusing to do so.

This is the best analogy I can think of to sum up my feeling about the New Zealand Green Party and their policies. Faction C is perhaps also an appropriate moniker for an organisation which sees involvement in a state government as a positive means of solving environmental and social issues. Anarchists have a long history of disliking politicians. However, some of us, or people we know and love, may be fooled by the idea that our local variant is better than those found elsewhere. Worse, some of us even fall into the trap of vaguely supporting a particular party because their policies are "not as bad" as the others. In this article I would like to discuss why the New Zealand Green Party is not worthy of any form of support from social or environmental activists, and why they are in general a waste of their supporters' time. Wading through the silliness that is the Green Party, I will focus on three key issues: peace, conservation and children.

The main bone of contention I have with the Green Party stems from the problem of the state as an institution. Anarchists are opposed to institutions of power, and those most prevalent in our lives are the state and global capitalism. These two things are by no means unrelated to one another. In fact, I think it would be fair to say that in the current scheme of things, neither could survive without the other. Without the support of states, the global free market would be unable to operate in the way it currently does. And as the general demise of state socialism has shown us, without a capitalist economy to prop it up, the state finds it very difficult to function. There are, of course, people who believe in removing one of these institutions but not the other. Right-wing libertarians believe that the free market, if left to its own devices, would make the world a much happier place. It doesn't take much imagination to picture what could go wrong here. Far over on the other side of the political meadow, Marxists believe that the State is a benevolent force that could be used to give control to the working classes, and then would peacefully evaporate. We don't need to do any imagining here. Pick a communist country, read its horrifying history.

Much contemporary activism is directed at global capitalism. While this focus is important, it can also lead to a sense that the state is a benevolent institution. I believe it is one of the fundamental tasks of anarchists today, to raise the profile of the case against the state. Globally, the state has been involved in more armed conflicts, and killed more innocent civilians, than any other violent organisation, since its inception. War is necessitated,



Green Party co-leader Russel Norman has recently adopted the 'serious politician' look.

initiated, paid for, orchestrated, and endlessly continued, by the state. But surely not by little old NZ? Well, the New Zealand state was founded violently through land confiscations, wars, imposition of sovereignty without consent. Since its beginnings it has been almost continually involved in one war or another, in support of the British Empire, the USA, or in some cases on its own terms.

The Greens assert that "Non-violence is one of the four guiding principles of the Green Party". So what are these people doing, actively participating in what is essentially an institution founded on, and sustained by, violence? Their "Defence and Peacekeeping Policy" also states that "New Zealand should ensure that its armed forces are capable of performing across a range of operations: from peacekeeping, disaster relief and resource protection through to defensive combat operations." How non-violent is that? Defensive combat operations aside, what do they think "peacekeeping" and "resource protection" might involve? Handing out flowers?

Conservation and the environment could be seen as the main planks of the Green Party's existence, although in recent years they've been keen to convince us that they're not just a bunch of tree-huggers: really, what they care about is economic growth. My argument on this subject is that their stance, while in parts sensible, is ineffectual. Here, the Greens are stuck in something of a catch-22. In Parliament, but outside of government, their stance on conservation is subject to continued ridicule, and unlikely to have any significant influence on government policy. Within government, they would be forced to make such massive concessions in order to retain a grip on power that the name "Green" would no longer be appropriate, and their conservation policy would largely evaporate. Aspects of their environment policy also suggest a certain amount of naivety, such as the statement "Our policy provides a viable, stable and sustainable commercial forestry industry of both native and exotic timber species." This moves away from the position taken by anti-logging protestors in the 1990s, many of whom are likely to be among their membership, that no native forestry can be sustainable, as local indigenous timbers simply take too long to grow.

Another argument I have in regard to the Greens' environment policy is that they are likely to be doing more harm than good to the wider environmental movement, which has better chances of real success through working at a grassroots level, outside of the institution of the state. The public profile of the Green Party means that many people associate all environmentalism with them, meaning we all get tarred with the same dumb hypocritical brush. I was informed anecdotally some years ago by an AgResearch employee that a Green Party member had told him "I never eat DNA." This is the kind of dumb shit one doesn't want to be linked with, if one is serious about actually fixing environmental problems.

Now, kids. I am of the opinion that a highly civilised society would be structured around the needs of the child. If we could just get this part right, I believe the future would be pretty much plain sailing. It is due to the fact that we get it so wrong, that our society is so stuffed. On the surface, the Greens seem to be saying something along these lines. However, as with their other policies, they continually contradict themselves both in written statements and in their behaviour.

I am a mother and involved in Playcentre (which, by the way, is an organisation run on essentially anarchist principles, although this is not stated). It is a parent cooperative which works by consensus decision making, in which parents attend an early childhood service with their children, and support their learning through free play.

Recently the Greens have blogged their support for Playcentre, which they are proposing to rescue by adding two-year-olds to the 20-hours free ECE funding. The problem is, the 20 hours for three- and four-year-olds has had, and continues to have, an absolutely crushing effect on Playcentre rolls. It provides an incentive, or even an expectation, for kids to be in paid care 20 hours a week. As Playcentre fees are minimal, the main barriers to attendance are parents' time, and competition from

other ECE services. Many Playcentres do not actually receive any 20 hours free funding. This measure is of most benefit to profit-making childcare centres, and those that are able to offer longer hours of care without parents volunteering their time. The Greens' child policy states: "Parents are first teachers but education from early childhood on should assist each child to make the most of their own natural abilities." If parents are first teachers, why the "but"? Apart from basically saying nothing, I take this statement to mean that children should be in some kind of early childhood service WITHOUT their parents, as us "first teachers" may not be as well placed because "real teachers" to assist them in making the most of their own natural abilities. Furthermore, they want to "Coordinate an integrated framework to monitor the development of every child and young person through coordinated assessments at key life stages." Well, that sounds vaguely sinister to my mind. And then what?

On the same topic, I'd like to mention Russel Norman and his sandpit-fight with Colin Craig. Dickhead versus dickhead would be funny if it weren't so depressing. I found it interesting that one of the things that set Russel off was some Conservative Party propaganda featuring a woman holding a baby. Fucking outrageous! Everyone knows women should stay right away from babies as much as they possibly can, right?

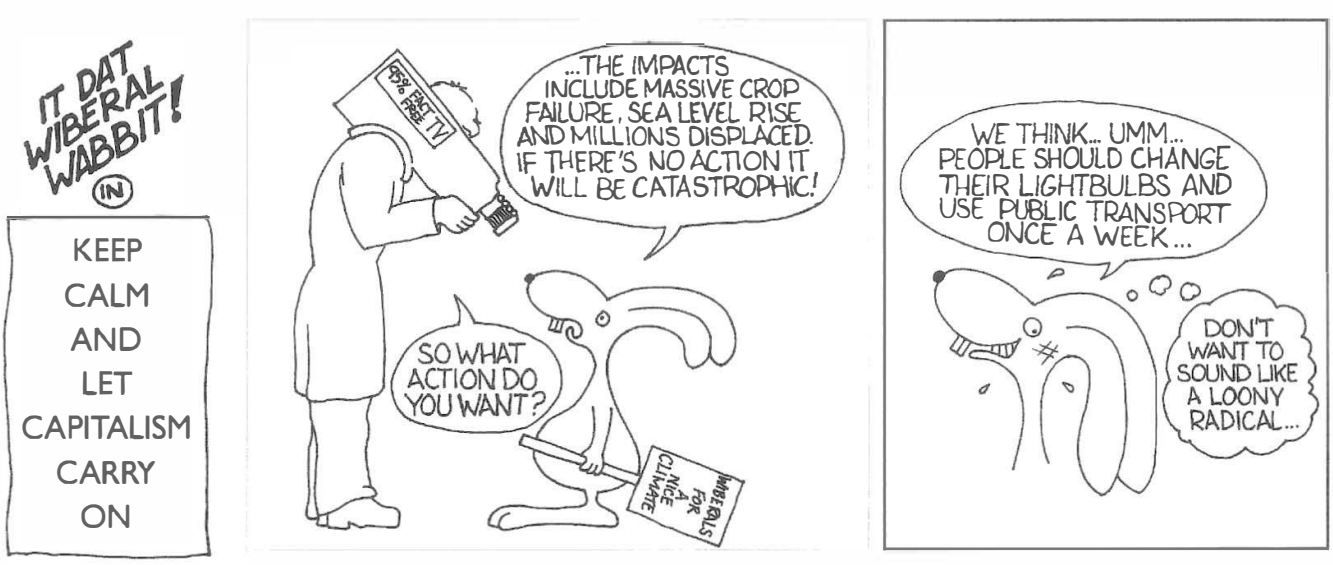
Yes, the Conservative Party have some very stupid ideas – but out of everything they've used in leaflets, ads and on their website, why focus on this? Conversely, Green Party propaganda (Courtesy of Natural Parent magazine) features MP Holly Walker with her tot in tow. But Holly, of course, does the right thing and goes off minus bub to work for a REALLY important cause. Yes, women need to make their own choices. But why denigrate the role of a full-time mother, in order to argue for gender equality? This is just another brand of misogyny.

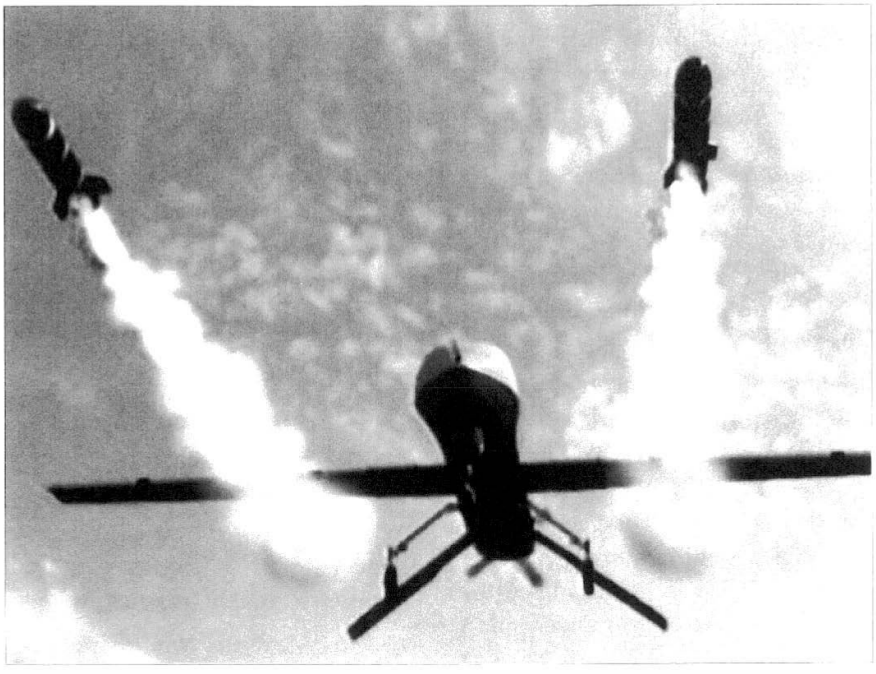
A personal source informs me that at the time of the 2011 election, a significant number of Green Party members were supportive of the idea of a coalition with the National Party. Given their respective policies and mutual history of mud-slinging, the motivating carrot in this instance is power.

It is possible that Green Party members are so naïve they actually believe forming a coalition government with National would help them save the environment, and put a stop to child poverty. While I accept this may be the case with some of the tie-dye contingent, I take a more cynical position on the rest of them, the MPs in particular. Deep in the parliamentary chamber, sniffing the hot winds out of John Key's bumhole, they've caught the fragrance of power, and mmm, it smells good.

Who cares what concessions might be required to get some more of this stuff? It doesn't take much to imagine what would happen, were the Green Party to rise to the status of coalition partner with either main party. We'd see some of the fastest waterings-down, bum-suckings, and about-turns, since, oh, whenever was the last time this happened.

Don't join them thinking you can change the system from within, and still be an anarchist. Don't vote for them. Don't hand out their leaflets. Don't staff their stalls. Don't put their stickers on your car, bike or skateboard. If they come to your doorway this September, ask them to leave @@@


IT DAT WIBERAL WABBIT!
IN
KEEP CALM AND LET CAPITALISM CARRY ON
95% FACT FREE TV
...THE IMPACTS INCLUDE MASSIVE CROP FAILURE, SEA LEVEL RISE AND MILLIONS DISPLACED. IF THERE'S NO ACTION IT WILL BE CATASTROPHIC!
SO WHAT ACTION DO YOU WANT?
WIBERALS FOR A NICE CLIMATE
WE THINK... UMM... PEOPLE SHOULD CHANGE THEIR LIGHTBULBS AND USE PUBLIC TRANSPORT ONCE A WEEK...
DON'T WANT TO SOUND LIKE A LOONY RADICAL...



Drones – Judge, Jury and Executioner

By Peppertree

THEY have names like "Predator" and they fire "Hellfire" missiles. What sounds like a fantasy game is cruel reality in countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen and probably Iraq by the time this is printed. Since Nobel Peace Prize winner Barack Obama has taken office, US drones have killed more than 2600 people.

The practice of using "Unmanned Aerial Vehicles" (UAVs) to execute people who are considered a security risk to the US government is justified as part of the "war on terror", which pretty much justifies anything. First, it was Bin Laden who had to be killed, but then the net was widened and now thousands are on the target list of the US Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC).

US journalist Jeremy Scahill explains in his documentary *Dirty Wars* how the US government's "war on terror" has developed its own deadly dynamics, and how JSOC has been given a free reign to kill any target that it believes to be a possible threat to US security. According to Scahill's sources, JSOC wages its own war in some 80 countries without being accountable to anyone.

JSOC's weapons of choice are drones. While in the past US military forces raided many homes and killed many people, these raids were carried out by foot soldiers who at least had to face their victims before they pulled the trigger. The use of drones has removed this minimal threshold, making the killings even more abstract. Now drones are operated from a remote location via video link, without any personal risk to the operator. The threshold for pulling the trigger is minimal when the targets are hazy images on a computer screen and the trigger feels just like that of a playstation.

Even a few years ago, this would not have been possible. But at the same time that the technical quality of computer games has reached a level where

the images seem totally realistic, the real war has been abstracted to the level of a computer game. There is simply no distinctive difference between playing a computer game and killing people in Afghanistan. A drone operator can kill dozens of people in different locations during one shift – something that no foot soldier could ever achieve. Increasingly, the US military hires people specifically to be drone operators, without their ever undergoing the regular military training that supposedly includes learning how to distinguish between combatants and civilians.

In October 2013, former US drone operator Brandon Bryant went public about what it felt like being a "sensor operator." His accounts debunk the myth of "precise, lawful, and effective" (a US Defense official) strikes. He told the story of watching a child running into the target area and being hit by a missile. After his first ever killing, he watched an injured man bleed to death. When Bryant quit his job, he was given a certificate praising him for killing 1626 people in his four years of service.

In November 2013, a NZ citizen, Abu Suhaib al-Australi, was killed in Yemen in one of these drone strikes. US officials say that al-Australi wasn't the main target but rather "collateral damage", along with four other people. It later turned out that Prime Minister John Key had issued a warrant to the GCSB to spy on al-Australi and Key admitted in May 2014 that this information had been passed on to the US. It is likely that this information helped JSOC identify al-Australi's whereabouts and those of the actual target of the assassination. Key said "it is almost certain" that the GSCB's information was used "in identifying targets" for drone attacks in Afghanistan and possibly in other countries.

But instead of the assassination of a NZ citizen in another country creating an outcry, John Key said that he was "quite comfortable" with it. He even said that drones are "an effective way of prosecuting people that are legitimate targets."

This is a slight understatement and whenever politicians in so-called democracies, who normally fall over themselves praising the judiciary system we have, talk like that, alarm bells should go off.

Drone strikes go far beyond prosecuting people, they execute them. And who defines what a "legitimate target" is? In a lot of cases, the "targets" aren't even known by name. In addition to executing people on a named list, JSOC increasingly carries out so-called signature strikes. The signature is a person's behaviour that matches a certain pattern that is considered suspicious. By visiting certain places at a certain time or meeting with certain people, a person can become the target of a drone strike without even knowing it.

But Key's statement also contains a message for us. Apart from terrorising communities in other countries, drones strikes are also designed to scare us.

There is and has always been a sector of society that considers legal proceedings too long-winded and a waste of money. Let us not under-estimate the number of people who believe that if the police arrest you, you are guilty and you have lost all human rights. The support (and media coverage) of the Sensible Sentencing Trust with its "lock-them-up-and-throw-away-the-key" message is proof. The Trust's head and public face, Garth McVicar, is a candidate for the Conservative Party which may form part of the next government. If things go horribly wrong, he could be justice minister in a future government.

Even McVicar would not introduce drone strikes against jay-walkers in Wellington, but part of the message is the threat. Drones soon will be part of the normal streetscape, be it police surveillance drones or Amazon delivery ones. In some places in Europe, the video from surveillance cameras is fed into a computer program that analyses the behavioural pattern of the people on the screen and alerts an operator to anything it considers suspicious – similar to how JSOC identifies "signature targets".

Consider yourself lucky that you are not in Yemen, is the message for us, designed to condition us to believe that being charged and tried in a court is some sort of luxury treatment that can be withdrawn at any moment. If your behaviour has raised the suspicion of the surveillance software, you're in trouble. Non-conformism is becoming a punishable offence and the difference between NZ and Yemen is only the degree of punishment dished out @@@

John Key disagrees with critics who say drone killings are execution without trial, in which ordinary people are massacred.

"For the most part drone strikes have been an effective way of prosecuting people that are legitimate targets," he said this morning.

"Yip, President Obama has used drones, that's a matter for them really but I think under the circumstances in which I can see they are being used for the most part I'm comfortable with it," Key said.

– Drone Strikes Justified – Key

Scoop.co.nz 20 May 2014

The Neo-liberal Prescription

By Ken V.

The New Zealand health care system: what it does

Health care in New Zealand is funded principally through taxes. Private health care, paid for by individuals from their own pocket or via medical insurance schemes, makes up the rest of spending on health, mainly for private surgical care (half of all elective surgery in the country) and private specialist consultations. About a quarter of New Zealanders are covered by private health insurance, down from a third in the 1990s.

Medical care is either free, as in public hospital treatment and clinics, or subsidised, as in general practitioner (GP) services, for New Zealand citizens and permanent residents or those with work permits, and their families including children under 19 years of age. Children's immunisations, prescriptions if under 6 years of age, and dental check-ups are provided free by the state. Some adults, such as those with community service cards or high user health cards, are exempt from prescription charges also. Pregnancy check-ups and childbirth services are free. Part-funded health care includes GP visits; prescriptions; physiotherapy, chiropracters and osteopaths if referred by a GP; and ambulance services.

The Accident Compensation Corporation covers costs of treatment of accidents, including medical misadventure. It covers anyone in the country, including non-residents such as tourists. It is funded by employer and employee levies, petrol tax, vehicle registration and general taxation.

History of the health care system and recent reforms

The first public hospitals were established under Governor George Grey in the 1850s, caring for patients who could not pay for a private doctor. The Public Health Act 1872 established local authority health boards, funded locally by ratepayers with some contribution from central government, to run the public hospitals. This reorganisation was continued by the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act 1885. Most health care was privately funded, but the destitute and those without resources were provided with a 'safety net'.

A department of public health was created by the Public Health Act of 1900, able to direct the regional health authorities in the event of a health crisis such as an epidemic. The revised Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act of 1909 increased central control of health boards, providing government subsidies to poorer areas. The Health Act 1920 changed the department of public health into the department of health.

The first Labour government's Social Security Act in 1938 aimed to provide free, universal health care. Doctors, however, through their medical association, refused to become salaried state employees and stop charging fees to wealthy patients. A compromise was introduced by the government, which paid poorer patients' fees via a general medical services benefit. Over time, this benefit failed to keep pace with inflation and increases made by doctors.

After reviews of the service in the 1970s, 14 area health boards were established under the Health Boards Act 1983, providing population-based funding to each region. The fourth Labour government, elected in 1984, continued this reform by gradually abolishing the hospital boards, which had existed for over a century.

In its second term (1987-90) the fourth Labour government introduced reviews, reforms and

restructuring that brought a competitive market basis to publicly funded health care, as advised by the Treasury, to limit health expenditure.

The area health boards, finally in place in 1990, allowed a more transparent funding system. In that year the fourth National government was elected and attempted to impose efficiencies and competition in a fully commercialised model. On 1 July 1993 four regional health authorities were set up, providing funding to 23 crown health enterprises (formerly the area health boards) which were expected to compete via the market and meet service-for-money targets. A public health commission subordinate to the ministry (formerly department) of health ensured that the elected government minister of health could distance her/himself from decisions, disasters and under-funding within the service.

The public health commission was abolished in 1996 and the National-NZ First coalition government elected that year amalgamated the four regional health authorities into one central health funding authority in 1998. Pharmac was set up at this time as the sole pharmaceutical buyer and has achieved major savings in the cost of drugs, at the expense of reduced choice.

The health funding authority and the ministry of health clashed over their roles, the ministry claiming to be engaged in policy-making rather than operational matters, allowing the minister of health to be further distanced from malfunction of the service.

By this time health workers and the public were disenchanted with health reforms. After a Labour-Alliance coalition government was formed in 1999 the final reform was initiated. In 2001, 21 district health boards were established, replacing the 14 area health boards. Primary health organisations were developed from 2002 to manage primary care, funded through capitation (related to deprivation of the population served) and covering general practitioners and their services (New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000).

Outcomes of the health care reforms

Politicians promised that the health service reforms would increase productivity and efficiency, but the opposite occurred. Reduced funding of the service also contributed to this result. Other sectors such as education were subjected to similar ill-judged restructuring or attempts at reform. A brief consideration of the performance of the highly commercialised United States health care sector, which absorbs over 12 per cent of GDP (compared with New Zealand's seven per cent) could have averted most of the upheaval in the first place.

The neoliberal experiment, in which the provision of health care was subjected to the wholesale application of business practices, had little audit or monitoring of its effects, but accrued evidence shows that the experiment was a failure. Subsequent governments came to realise this and the commercial model was reversed with the absorption of the health funding authority back into the ministry of health by the fifth Labour government, elected in 1999.

The number of New Zealanders with private health insurance fell from a third to about a quarter, because the commercialisation of the sector increased health insurance premiums.

Restructuring has been called "a classic folly that health systems engage in". "The gains in efficiency sought through restructuring are elusive at best, and reorganising twice in a six-year period created the opposite, with inefficiencies resulting. ... Continuously rearranging things exacerbates this, creating bew-ilderment and even incredulity."

How the health care system compares with other countries

On 2009 statistics, New Zealand has the lowest per capita spending on health of comparable countries in the OECD such as the UK, Netherlands and Denmark. However, life expectancy is similar to those countries even with this lower cost. Thanks to Pharmac, drug expenditure is the most cost-effective in the world. Primary care doctors have higher satisfaction than in other countries. (Matheson 2009)

On the negative side, teenage suicide rates are the highest in the OECD, spending on early childhood health is poor and obesity rates are second only to those of the US. The number of practising physicians at 2.3 per 1000 population is low compared with 2.8 in Australia, 3.9 in Norway and an OECD average of 3.2.

New Zealand has one of the highest performing health systems with the lowest expenditure amongst comparable countries. In the US, in contrast, a very expensive system and very poor health outcomes exist side by side.

Health equity in New Zealand

A recent study looked at chronic care management in various district health boards and concluded that while managerial rhetoric supported equity, action

was lagging, specifically in funding decisions, programme development, imp-lementation and monitoring. Rural populations and ethnic minority groups failed to receive an equitable share of health care.

Ethnic inequalities of life expectancy, specifically those between Māori and other ethnic groups, have improved since the 1950s, except for the late 1980s to '90s which may reflect the disproportionate effects on Māori (including higher unemployment) of the 1980s neoliberal reforms.

Underfunding of the health service

Those working in the health service, and many patients and their carers, have complained about underfunding for decades. The 1990s saw underfunding in real terms, including failure to provide for the cost of new technologies and treatments. Analysis of Treasury estimates of health spending for the next four years show that in real terms, allowing for new services, increasing costs, population growth and ageing of the population, a large shortfall is projected (see graph).

These are Treasury figures and amount to a two to three per cent annual reduction in the next four years. The responsibility for trimming the costs falls on the district health boards.

"Treasury warned in the preparation of the 2013 Budget that such cuts would require major changes to our health services. This could include 'more targeted services and funding' which implies dropping services, making some available only to certain groups, or introducing user charges."

What is it like to work in the New Zealand health service?

Despite the results of the satisfaction survey among GPs mentioned earlier, a combination of restructuring and underfunding over many decades has seriously affected health staff, particularly those working in hospitals and retirement homes. The cost-effectiveness of the service and its high standard compared with other countries has been achieved and maintained in spite of demoralising bouts of restructuring and underfunding. Whether this high standard can continue for much longer is open to debate.

Many health care professionals left New Zealand during or after the reforms, including many recent graduates, because of market forces which attracted them to better salaries overseas. About half of all practising doctors and nurses are now foreign-trained immigrants, many of whom also stay for a

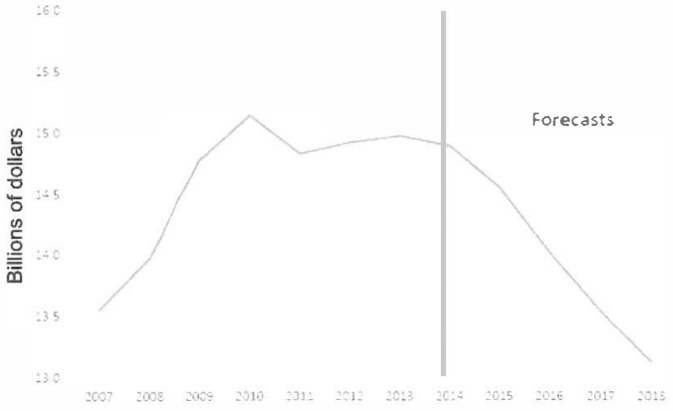


Fig. 1. Health expenses in real terms (2014 dollars).

short time before seeking better pay and conditions overseas.

At the patient bedside, nurses have expressed growing dissatisfaction with the pressures of their work. Growing demand and reduced nursing numbers have led to this result. An article in the *Kai Tiaki* nursing journal in July suggests that patient care rationing is the "new normal". High nurse unemployment rates, particularly among new graduates, prevents others from speaking out.

As stated earlier, the demands of an ageing, growing population expecting more health care are putting growing strain on the system. My observations from working in hospital emergency departments in Wellington and Wairarapa over the last ten years are that the workload has increased substantially and departments are now always busy, at any time of day.

What are the solutions? An anarchist prescription

An anarchist health system, like an anarchist society, would be organised in accordance with the anarchist principles of individual freedom and social justice. It would be both holistic and patient-focused, with a strong emphasis on preventive medicine. Delivery would be equitable, free and according to need. Spending on new facilities and treatments would be decided by the community, with money drawn from other sectors that are less deserving of public money, such as the military, prisons, roading and corporate welfare. Rationing of health care would be determined by the whole community, with collective, co-operative action to address, for example, a lack of donor kidneys for transplant.

Preventive medicine requires co-operation between individuals, local communities and health professionals with all parties sharing responsibility for health, in contrast to the laissez-faire

individualistic system that exists. (Unlike in the UK, New Zealand GPs do not know if a patient on their list is transient or long-term, and so screening programmes cannot be comprehensive.)

A health system that improves the health of the entire population, rather than treating sickness when it arises, is what an anarchist health system would look like.

It would make use of the best medical technologies while avoiding futile treatment (many AIDS patients in the US die in intensive care units, and 30 per cent of Medicare spending is for patients in their last year of life).

Health care administration would not be based on economic theory, as it has been since the Rogernomics era. Hospitals would be run democratically with input from the local community, not via the sham democracy of hospital boards stacked with political appointees and ignored by central government if they make polite noises about lack of funding.

Maldistribution of funding would be avoided. Countries with a lower differential between highest paid and lowest paid employees, such as Japan and Norway, have a greater life expectancy through more equitable incomes leading to a lower need for health care.

Health professionals in this country have moved away from a paternalistic view of their patients in the last generation or two, but improvements can still be made. The direct participatory democracy of an anarchist society would extend to the doctor-patient relationship. Decisions would be reached by mutual participation, understanding and agreement, keeping in mind the cost or benefit to the rest of the community @@@

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Book review

Globalising anarchism

Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Colonial Imagination by Benedict Anderson
Verso, 2007, ISBN-13: 9781844670901
Reviewed by Svenda

THE WORK of political scientist Benedict Anderson should not be overlooked by those interested in Anarchism, or indeed political philosophy generally.

Crucially, Anderson was the first to fully extrapolate on the theory, now widely known, of the newspaper and other forms of mainstream media as nation-building tools. In 1983, after extensive research in Indonesia he coined the term "Imagined Communities" to describe the constructed sense of community spirit which is inspired by media within a nation-state, such as the feeling of "nationhood" which is encouraged through newspaper coverage of national sporting events. Anderson concludes that without the national vernacular of the printed press to create these "Imagined Communities" the emergence of modern nation-states, which replaced empires over the past few hundred years, would not have been possible.

Although Anderson's development of theories around print capitalism provides his most overt contribution to anarchist thought, one of his latest offerings, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Colonial Imagination*, is nevertheless a highly impressive exploration of a heretofore under-appreciated strand of anarchist history: the development of militant Anarchist uprisings in the Philippines during an era of global colonial oppression, and the international network of resistance that emerged, fueling this and other similar movements.

Following Marx's death in 1883, the radical left in Europe was internationalised, meaning the fight against imperialism, which drew inspiration from the anarchists Peter Kropotkin and Errico Malatesta, was now able to include smaller and more distant countries in the colonial world, such as Cuba and the Philippines. This was in defiance of geographical divisions, but also, for the first time in history, allowed supportive relationships between the "bourgeoisie" writers and artists of late-19th century northern European anarchism with peasants and agricultural labourers across the globe.

Transglobal co-ordination also meant that for the first time, Filipino anarchists could read about and learn from the Boer nationalist struggle against British imperialism, and co-ordinate their efforts with support from anarchists across Northern Europe, but particularly in France. The invention of the telegraph as well as the introduction of the Universal Postal Union in 1876 also created the means necessary for this global networking, along with new possibilities for traveling in the late 19th century, as demonstrated by Malatesta's four years spent in Buenos Aires, something Marx could never have achieved earlier in the century.

For the first time in human history, the industrial revolution allowed for speedy communication between political groups worldwide, something integral to the early emergence of globalisation.

Anderson creatively interweaves various stories and histories using techniques akin to what he describes as a sort of "political astronomy" (to borrow the term from Herman Melville), or a "vast rhizomal network" which he has narrated with fascinating, amusing and entertaining detail, owing to his dexterity as a writer and historian. He quotes liberally from the written words of these global activists in their original languages, with his own translations accompanying them.

The political movements Anderson explores were geographically isolated, but crucially linked – again partly due to the possibilities afforded by the printing press, only this time used by radicals for the benefit of oppressed people worldwide, rather than as a controlled and censored instrument of nation-building, as in his earlier work on the Imagined Community. And it is that which makes this book so endlessly enjoyable, as it demonstrates with such creativity and detail the ways in which people can find empowerment through the collective use of alternative modes of information distribution at a grassroots level – independent of, and against, centralised government power.

The hardcover of this brilliant book is currently on the shelves at the Freedom Shop and priced at $31. It sits alongside a wealth of other titles, a significant amount of which are brand-new acquisitions from AK Press in California. Come in and have a read! @@@

Book review

What lurks in libraries?

Anarchism: A Very Short Introduction by Colin Ward
Oxford University Press, 2004, ISBN: 0-19-280477-4
Reviewed by Barrie Sargeant

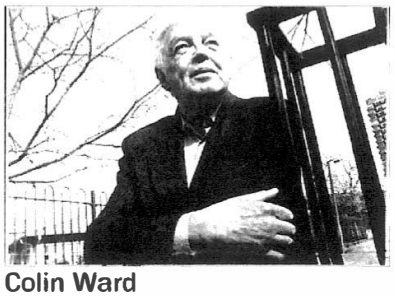
THE Chief Librarian at Wellington City Library, Tomasi Lilalia recently said "When it comes to political stuff, we just don't know what to do with all these introductory books about anarchism we have bulging out of our shelves. Frankly, the sooner a revolution comes and makes them unnecessary, the sooner we can get on with stocking books about making your own ice-cream or whatever".

Yeah OK, that quote is a fake. Truth is, there are few books published in the past decade by mainstream publishers that introduce anarchism in a knowledgeable, sympathetic and accessible way. Veteran (and now sadly deceased) anarchist Colin Ward has compensated for this dearth of material here, in slightly over one hundred pages. He sets out to explain anarchist theory and practice in just enough words to gain the reader's interest and whet his/her appetite for further inquiry. Ward's task is difficult but overall he succeeds.

In the first two chapters Ward offers definitions and practical historical examples, striking a balance between seeing anarchism as the intellectual creation of four European men with beards and the common aspiration and action of activists the world over. Some may dispute the relative weighting of the elements in this synthesis, but it at least gives the reader names to pursue when looking for more detailed information.

The writer offers a good chapter on anarchist attitudes to work and the prison system. Another usefully delineates between progressive and libertarian educational styles, based on voluntary participation with the latter. There is also a chapter about right-wing libertarians that begins by positing their value as contributors to anarchist discussion while finishing strongly (fortunately) with the statement that "....their inventiveness seems to be limited to providing an ideology for untrammeled market capitalism".

A late chapter titled *Quiet Revolutions* lists subjects from fashion, sexuality, gender relations, to education and the internet. These topics are linked as facets of society that have been positively influenced by anarchists. Ward argues that though these successes fall short of achieving an ultimate social revolution, their combined benefit should not be ignored.



Colin Ward

Lest he be accused of reformism for the sake of it, Ward's subsequent discussion of the globalisation movement clearly establishes he believed old-fashioned revolution is still of strategic merit. This attempt to defend gradual gains without excusing the current socio-economic system will be dismissed outright by the impatient among the already converted. Hopefully the rest of us will stop to consider his point.

Any book on anarchism written in the past decade or so would be expected to address new global trends arising since at least the 1960s. Ward certainly recognizes that the world has changed and attempts to address this by for example acknowledging the significant growth of environmental consciousness and the greening of anarchism. While this environmental topic is adequately handled given the limited space available to the author, there are other topics less satisfactorily developed. The chapter on the rise of religious fundamentalism and the decline of the secular state is right in saying that the theorists of the nineteenth century failed to anticipate this trend. Unfortunately Ward offers scant indication that modern anarchists have attempted to seriously tackle the subject either. He gives the reader little beyond an avowed hope that people talk to their neighbours more, as a way of combating the influence of fundamentalism and ethnic nationalism.

To conclude, readers may not agree with all the omissions, selections or weighing of the material included in this slim book. However, there is enough there to keep the curious newcomer accurately informed and interested to learn more about anarchism. As part of his legacy Ward has added a useful volume to the small category of books that introduce anarchism to readers in a way that combines brevity and thoughtful commentary.

Oh yes, and it really is one of the few books on the subject to be found at Wellington City Library (and also stocked at The Freedom Shop). Check it out @@@

Molly McGuire's Cookery Corner presents:

Curried Bubble and Squeak

IT'S COLD outside (it's cold inside too, that's a story for another day, but seriously why do we put up with such cold, damp, and unhealthy housing conditions? We don't have to live this way, and if we really cared about the environment we would be demanding proper insulation, properly sealed windows and doors, proper ventilation, and proper heating, rather than the inefficient systems we have, which as far as I can tell, serve only to keep the energy companies in record profits).

But anyway, it's cold outside, which means I want hearty, spicy, warming food. The following recipe is a curried take on that old English favorite, bubble and squeak. Potatoes, healthy leafy greens, and lots of spices, how can that be bad?

Ingredients

2 – 4 tablespoons canola or other oil

1 onion, peeled and finely sliced

2 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped

1 – 2 teaspoons (or more to taste) curry power

1 tablespoon chopped fresh ginger

1 teaspoon chopped fresh chilli (or more to taste)

About 500 grams cooked potatoes, cut into rough chunks

About 200 – 300 grams cooked cabbage, kale, brussel sprouts or other dark leafy green, roughly shredded or chopped

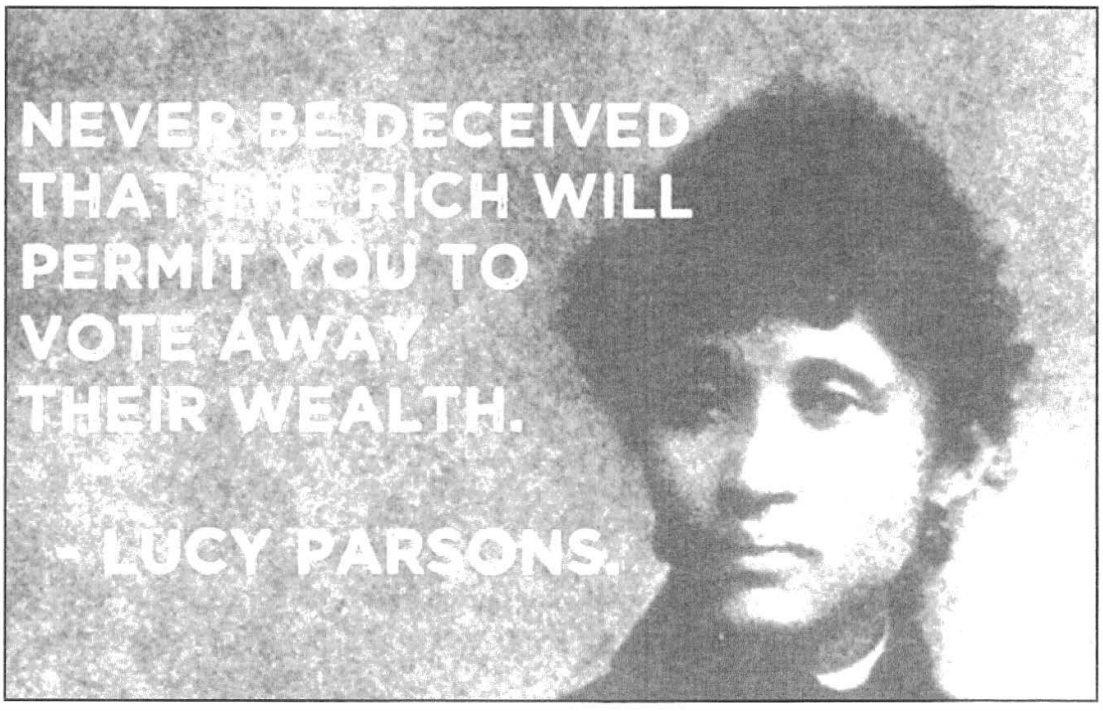
Salt and pepper to taste

Heat two tablespoons of oil in a large, nonstick frying pan over medium heat. Add the onion and fry, stirring from time to time, until softened and starting to turn golden, about 15 minutes. Add the garlic, ginger, chilli and the curry powder, and cook for another couple of minutes.

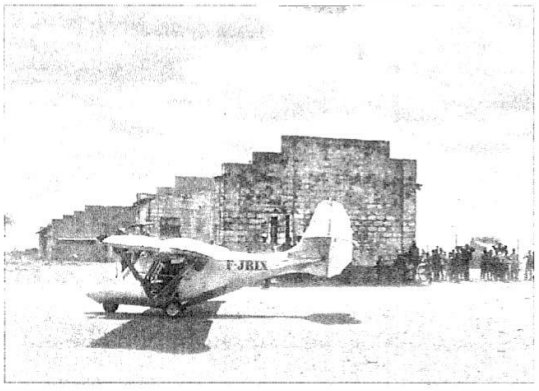
Add the potatoes and cook for a few minutes, stirring often, until they start to colour. You may need to add a little more oil at this stage, and you'll probably find you also need to use the edge of a spatula to scrape up some of the crusty bits from the bottom of the pan. Add the cabbage or greens and cook, stirring, for another two to three minutes.

Eat hot right away and feel warm (at least for a while).

Also for the non-vegans reading this, I highly recommend a poached or fried egg on top @@@



With friends like these...



We Come as Friends
France/Austria 2014
110 minutes
Reviewed by Sam Buchanan

THE WORLD'S newest nation state, South Sudan, is the subject of this grueling, surreal documentary directed by Hubert Sauper. The director is best known for his film *Darwin's Nightmare*, which covered the social and environmental destruction of the area of Tanzania bordering Lake Victoria.

For the United States government and its oil company mates, a new state meant that a part of Sudan's oil fields which the Sudanese government was selling off to Chinese companies, could be divided off and opened for their exploitation. Western social democrats, who see states through rose-tinted glasses and Africa as a continent divided by ethnic group and religion, saw the nation-state as a means of protecting local, mostly Christian, people from attacks sponsored by the Muslim, Arabic-speaking, Sudanese dictatorship.

Business interests saw opportunities to set up shop, to exploit land and resources and to sell guns and uniforms and all the other trappings of the modern state. Creating a new nation state suited everybody except, perhaps, the people who had to live there.

The film shows that the 19th Century colonists' 'Race for Africa' is by no means over. As the 2011 independence referendum loomed, Sauper and his mate built an aircraft and flew it to the Sudan to make the film. Sauper describes the tiny and ridiculous-looking plane as "a Trojan horse" – it allowed the film makers to land where they chose, sometimes citing supposed "engine trouble" to allow them to land beside military bases and other places of interest. Initially meeting less than helpful attitudes from the authorities in the countries they flew through, the two purchased white pilots' uniforms and adopted an officious manner with those they met on landing, resulting in much more cooperative responses. Sauper also describes the plane in symbolic terms – as a "phallic", white-painted piece of Western technology dropping out of the sky into Africa.

There's little narration, mostly it's just footage of conversations with people the film makers ran across as they traveled around the country. Chinese oil workers play pool in a bullet-proof shelter, missionaries spread the word of the God as it is perceived in Texas, a politician forgets the words to the national anthem. School children are abused for not wearing uniforms. Other kids have shoes and socks forced on their feet by missionaries. Locals vary from deeply eloquent to eccentric in their descriptions of colonisation and what it has done to Africa. Foreign business people, UN workers, missionaries and politicians are all clearly barking mad, describing their various forms of self-interest as being for the benefit of the new country as they go about imposing their visions of what is good for other people.

Locals voted for independence in an effort to end the war their government was conducting against them. Sauper reckons they had little other interest in forming a nation. But, by the end of the film, South Sudan is celebrating its maturity as a nation state by initiating its own war against north Sudan.

Since the film was made a civil war has erupted between the cowboy hat-wearing president (the hat a gift from George Bush) and his deputy, demonstrating that the new nation of South Sudan will be no different to all the others that have plagued Africa since European powers drew those deadly lines on their maps @@@